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4 September 1979

# Sub-Saharan Africa Report

FOUO No. 647



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## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS

NATURE OF AFRICAN MARXISM EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 25 Jul 79 pp 74-75

[Article by Sophie Bessis: "Was Lenin Born in Arusha?"]

[Text] How can the countries in Africa which have embraced scientific socialism as their doctrine be recognized? What signs can be used to identify them? Contrary to what one might think, today it is not so much the method or rule or the type of development chosen which permits the labelling of these states' governments, as much as their vote on international issues: the recognition by Angola and Ethiopia of the new pro-Vietnam Cambodian Government is one of the most recent examples.

While many countries on the continent qualify as socialist, the Marxist states comprise so limited a club that disloyalties are almost as numerous as attachments. At most, about ten heads of state adhere to this ideology today and seek to apply this type of development to their countries.

The map of African Marxism has varied greatly since the early 1960's. At the dawn of their countries' independence, some honored leaders thought that political emancipation constituted only one stage of national liberation and that the social aspect of the struggle was as important as gaining a seat in the United Nations. Moreover, the scientific socialism of Marx and Lenin appeared to respond to the widespread aspirations of equality and social justice, and, in addition, pointed out the means to achieving those goals. Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and Modibo Keita soon adopted those directives. One could have imagined that, given the euphoria of the sixties and the new winds of freedom and self-respect that were blowing across the continent, they were going to form a new sect. But it did not happen that way and for a long time Marxism was limited to Ghana, Guinea and Mali. Even worse was that in 1966 Nkrumah was overthrown by a military coup, which put an end to his experiment. He found asylum with Sekou Toure. Two years later, Modibo Keita suffered the same fate.

While a variety of socialist experiments was developing throughout all of Africa, Marxism in its purest and strictest form appeared hardly to attract any more followers. Had it thus become disqualified on the Dark Continent?

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It had often been accused of being foreign to the African mentality: "Does Senegalese blood flow through the veins of Karl Marx, or was Lenin born in Arusha?" sang the poet Okot P'Bitek. Since it had not even succeeded in proving its superiority in the area of economics, it thus appeared doomed to oblivion.

That was the low point marked, however, by several exceptions. Massemba-Debat guided the course of Congolese politics toward Marxism, followed by Marien N'Gouabi who replaced him in 1968 as head of state. Siad Barre did likewise in Somalia beginning in 1969. To everyone's surprise, in 1972 Dahomey in turn went the same route and broke with the past by taking the name Benin. But it has only been since 1974 that Marxism actually returned as a force in Africa.

Intellectuals and the Military

In 1974 Haile Selassie transferred power to the military who quickly took radical measures until Marxism was officially adopted by Derg (military provisional council). Also in 1974 the independence of Guinea-Bissau marked the end of the Portuguese empire in Africa. Amilcar Cabral, the ideologist for PAIGC, was a convinced Marxist, and his successors have been governing the new state according to his directives. In 1975 Mozambique and Angola finally obtained their independence--the latter with the jolts we are aware of--and adopted scientific socialism at the onset. The same year, with Didier Ratsiraka's rise to power, Madagascar joined the group, followed by the Comoro Islands.

While this new generation of leaders adheres to the same doctrine, they have not all employed the same methods of instituting it and these can be divided into two major categories. Following the line of Nkrumah or Cabral, the rules of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau are intellectuals who have led the struggle for their country's liberation. Attracted to Marxism-Leninism during their time in Europe, almost all of them have had a strong involvement in organizations of the left or far left; their choice has generally been thought out maturely and, even if they do not avoid criticism, they know exactly what they are talking about and what they want.

Such is not the case for the military officers of the left, at least when they first enter the political arena: when they take control, the majority of them do not know what to do with the authority which they have gained so easily. They need mobilizing slogans.

Far From Orthodoxy

Marxism in its extreme form could offer them some simple formulas for winning over the masses aspiring toward improved conditions. Some of them, in Somalia, N'Gouabi's Congo or Madagascar, did not stay at that level but have, in time, deepened their conception of a doctrine which at first they only vaguely understood.

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However, it appears difficult to remain a Marxist in Africa and, despite sometimes explosive declarations, acts of treason continue. Without mentioning the Comoro Islands, where reaction has been brutal, some countries today are abandoning orthodoxy more or less discreetly because of nationalism--as in Somalia, which could not stand to be on the same side as its sworn enemy Ethiopia--financial need, or in an attempt to save their declining economy. Thus, Guinea, more discreetly the Congo (at least until Sassou Nguesso's legitimate coup), appear to be turning more and more each day toward the West, which alone seems capable of solving the problems facing them.

But beyond these fluctuations, a significant part of the African population presently lives according to the teachings of Marx and Lenin. What significance does this have on a continent where these teachings could not influence the bias of communist parties planted there in former times? Indeed, it is only in northern, northeastern and southern Africa that the communist parties created in the 1920's may be found. Elsewhere, Marxism made a timid entry after World War II due first of all to the union movements, followed by the struggles for national liberation. Far from being internalized by the people it was parachuted from above and this was probably one of the main reasons for the difficulty in imposing it.

A Constant: Pragmatism

But the embodiments of Marxism in Africa are creating a type of society which distinguishes itself less than one would imagine from experiences using different principles. Internally, a solidly structured party and the nationalization of means of production are the watchwords of those in charge. At the stage where they were before the takeover, such as the MPLA or the PAIGC, the function of the parties was to rally the masses and almost become one with the people. At a second stage, in becoming more radical, the ideologist adopted Lenin's concept of the party vanguard, comprised of strongly politicized elements who were called upon to spread the good news of the revolution to the people. Elsewhere, in the Congo as well as Benin, the party was created from all parts.

As for the party's top hierarchy, it is the same as that of the state, allowing for easy application of party doctrine in the management of the country's affairs. It is often there, moreover, that the shoe begins to pinch: the lack of strictness and recriminations against the bureaucratic and inefficient state which has a monopoly over all essential economic activity are the most frequent complaints of opponents of this type of government.

Another paradox is that nationalization does not necessarily imply the elimination of foreign interests. While the national private sector is reduced to its most simple expression, private investments by the West are encouraged: Americans are profiting from Guinea's bauxite, the oil companies are present everywhere, and French commercial companies continue to prosper in the Congo and in Benin.



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All of the Marxist countries are at the same time signers of the Lome treaty: Madagascar, the Congo, Benin and Guinea-Bissau are joined to France by cooperation agreements. While the discussion is formal, pragmatism prevails in reality and there is a constant margin between theory and practice. It is such a wide margin that the uninformed observer may rightly wonder what, in these areas, distinguishes the Marxist states from other African countries. With some very rare exceptions, a single party as the preferred instrument of power is the rule and the UNC [Cameroonian National Union] or the PDCI (Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast) are hardly different from their "Red" counterparts.

Choosing a Side

In the area of economics, the absence of a bourgeoisie in charge of development calls for the establishment everywhere of a state capitalism as the moving force. Planning is everywhere an incentive for growth. The belief in the virtue of industrial models, which are not always adapted to national realities, can be seen from one end of the continent to another to such an extent that the division between Marxist and non-Marxist countries gives way in fact to a plan which is common to all of Africa's developing nations which are separated by nuances rather than actual differences; nothing resembles a state society more than another state society even if the wall of ideology separates them. And exchanges of experiences among people of the Ivory Coast, the Congo, Benin or Senegal in these areas of mutual interest occur frequently.

However, today the Marxist states are more easily identifiable than Mali or Ghana was in the sixties. That is because, since that time, the continent has become a privileged field of struggle in which the great powers are becoming involved. Thus, everyone is choosing sides, and alliance with the Soviet Union is a fundamental element of the Marxist states' foreign policy. With the Angola and Ethiopia issues, the African rule of <sup>seems</sup> to be torn to shreds. The Cubans are part of the CIA's conspiracies. Moscow hits a nerve and the West retorts... It is becoming increasingly difficult for the states to avoid bipolarization in their international relations and it is feared that the rift may be widened between the moderates and progressives where the difference lies less than ever in the type of society chosen.

The ebb and flow of Marxism follows geopolitical demands. If that is the case, can we really talk of the planting of scientific socialism in Africa? The issue is still far from being understood. While an African Marxism exists by which many states can be recognized, it is uncertain whether Marxism has actually placed its mark on the continent.

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INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS

NEW DIVISIONS SURFACE AT OAU SUMMIT

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 1 Aug 79 pp 13, 14, 16, 17

[Text] The 16th summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity opened in a mini-carnival atmosphere. Despite their desire to exceed themselves, the Liberian authorities were finally overwhelmed. The disorder which prevailed in the Unity Conference Center hall on that afternoon of 17 July was a good reflection of the confusion of the organizers in the face of a record attendance.

Twenty-six chiefs of state were present at these sessions and some of them were present for the first time at this annual forum of African leaders. For example, the Congolese Sassou Nguesso, whose lackluster taking of the oath was that of a novice, or the Algerian Chadli Bendjedid, who distinguished himself by his discretion, leaving the speeches and the initiative to his minister of foreign affairs, Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia.

It was the Ugandan Godfrey Binaisa who made a shattering entrance upon the African scene. Not only because he was the first chief of state to step on Liberian soil, by arriving in Monrovia 48 hours before the opening of the summit meeting, but mainly because of the controversy aroused by the conditions of his accession to power. This contributed to making the Ugandan president the hero, or the villain--depending on the faction--of this meeting in Monrovia.

A last attempt by the Liberian William Tolbert to bring together, before the conference, Presidents Julius Nyerere and Ja'far Numayri to speak about the role of Tanzania in the eviction of Amin Dada having met with failure, the confrontation of these two men became inevitable. The Sudanese chief of state, departing president of the OAU, did not mince matters by condemning, starting on 17 July and peremptorily, the Tanzanian intervention.

"I was the victim of aggression and not the aggressor," protested Nyerere, who tried to submit a confidential report proving the culpability of "his friend Amin." But the few bursts of laughter which this humorous remark aroused were not enough to calm the debate. Ja'far Numayri, who had returned to his seat as head of the Sudanese delegation demanded the right

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to speak again. In the face of the turn of events, Edem Kodjo, secretary general of the organization, advised the new acting president, William Tolbert, to adjourn the session in order to avoid irreparable harm. But the tone had been set.

The polemic inspired by the Tanzanian intervention is surely one of the gourmet dishes of this summit meeting. With, in the background, the thorny problem of the rights of man, which many wanted to evade. President Tolbert certainly referred to it in his address and it is known that Senegal had asked that it be inscribed on the agenda. But it was the new Ugandan chief of state who unequivocally brought up the 18th of July. Mr Binaisa denounced the illogic of his peers who present the situation of his country as "an academic matter, interesting only to students of philosophy, instead of condemning the Central African Empire and Equatorial Guinea, which organize collective massacres of children and peaceful citizens."

Cleavages

Godfrey Binaisa replied to the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who, for his last summit meeting as chief of state--the military men in power in Lagos should in principle yield place to the civilians in October--had delivered, like his Sudanese counterpart and later, the Libyan representative, a regulation attack against the Kampala authorities. General Obasanjo was even to have read a telegram sent by a certain "front for the Liberation of Uganda." For his part, Mr Ali Triki was said to have suggested that the conference condemn Tanzania. Thus was witnessed the end of the alliances based on ideology, while a new cleavage based on material interest took effect.

In this affair the Nigerian president displayed a passion and clumsiness which all but capsized the conference. The hostility of Nigeria toward Tanzania is explained by the fact that Lagos and Tripoli seemed to have sealed a tactical alliance in order to dictate their will in the settlement of certain matters of the continent. The fact that Nigeria served as the locomotive in the present circumstance is not due to chance. Directly implicated in the conflict through having tried to save Amin Dada (who, moreover, has taken refuge in Libya), the country of Colonel Qadhdhafi voluntarily took a back seat.

Wisdom

It avoided its usual custom of sticking to all-out positions. Its ally of the moment, Nigeria, was all the more comfortable in taking its turn as the intransigent, in that an old quarrel opposed it to Tanzania, which was one of the four African countries to have recognized Biafra.

In any case, the Nigerian-Libyan complicity, which had already been displayed in the Chadian affair, has completely broken the inflexible rule of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country. At Monrovia,

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actually, they were raising the question of the legitimacy of one government or another. It was in this context that the Guinean president, Ahmed Sekou Toure, sounded the voice of wisdom of the "founding fathers" of the OAU. "We are not here to challenge states," said the Guinean leader, not without recalling that Idi Amin had come to power by a coup d'etat and that he had left in the same way. A subtle condemnation of the military regimes represented in majority in the hall? Mr Sekou Toure was content to conclude that "The OAU is a forum of coordination and not a court."

With the withdrawal of the Tanzanian-Ugandan dossier, passions subsided. President Binaisa, who had rattled the door the day before was in his seat. And the conference was able to continue its work. But it is clear that henceforth matters will not proceed as they did before. African leaders will not remain insensitive to what is happening in neighboring countries. Otherwise the secretary general of the organization, the Togolese Edem Kodjo, would not have reason to deplore, as he did in his "Discourse on the State of Africa," that the continent was "more than previously shaken in its foundations by internal and fratricidal conflicts among states, thus providing foreign powers the opportunity to intervene in African affairs."

Until now the resignations of responsible African officials and their tendency to refrain from all constructive criticism has been leading inevitably to the status quo if these attitudes do not purely and simply encourage all kinds of excesses. In such conditions can one be surprised to see Zaire marching in step with the Western powers by recommending the Anglo-American plan for the settlement of the Zimbabwe problem? Presenting the message of President Mobutu who, against all expectations did not make the trip to Monrovia, the Zairian prime minister, Mr Bo Boliko, asked the OAU to take the initiative in organizing a conference of the Patriotic Front and the government of Abel Muzorewa, without forgetting to associate Great Britain.

Maneuvers

It is nevertheless known that for 14 years the governments which have succeeded each other in London have been incapable of solving the Rhodesian problem. The Zairian move fits directly into the Anglo-American maneuvers, which consist of presenting the Africans with an accomplished fact.

In accordance with this view, the leaders in London and Washington have advised Bishop Muzorewa to do everything to eliminate Ian Smith from the government. Simultaneously it will have to modify the constitution in a direction taking account the black majority. After that, the main obstacles to the recognition of his regime would be lifted. The Western powers hope that the endorsement which they will give to Abel Muzorewa will unleash, in Africa itself, the process of diplomatic recognitions.

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The Mobutu plan makes this scenario its own. Joshua Nkomo, copresident of the Patriotic Front, nevertheless repeated to the delegates in his pathetic speech that the solution of the problem is being handled with arms. But even if President Albert Rene of the Seychelles demanded that Muzorewa be brought before a tribunal, even if the Libyan Ali Triki demanded his condemnation without appeal, and if, in a general way the "progressives" are hostile to all compromise, there are many voices which recall that while the OAU recognized the military leadership of the Patriotic Front, it never granted it exclusive political leadership. That means everything. The year to come risks placing a heavy burden on the future of Zimbabwe.

Bridgehead

Liberia, which will occupy the presidency of the OAU in the coming year, is considered as the bridgehead of the United States in Africa. Its president, William Tolbert, is a practicing Christian who begins and ends all his speeches with an invocation to heaven. He is a member of that Methodist Church of which Muzorewa is one of the hierarchical chiefs in Africa. This is why a rumor reporting the presence of a delegation representing the present regime of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in Monrovia made the rounds of the Liberian capital. Actually it appears that the Salisbury bishop wanted to take advantage of the religious links which united him with the Liberian president in order to infiltrate the corridors of the conference. The maneuver was frustrated by the vigilance of the Africans. But the problem of Zimbabwe has not been examined at depth nonetheless.

The fact is that the functioning of the Organization of African Unity is paralyzed. The heavy machine established 16 years ago has suffered the wear and tear of time to the point of being obsolete today. The most eloquent demonstration of this situation is the fact that at Monrovia the "summit" of the chiefs of state adjourned its work before the ministerial meeting, supposed to set up the agenda, had finished its own work, which means that they wallowed in confusion.

Phraseology

Added to that, the OAU today comprises 50 states which raise that many problems each time. But in the space of 1 year, the African leaders meet only once and their representatives, the ministers of foreign affairs, meet only twice. The time thus provided does not permit a deep study of the cases. The result: the more delicate problems are dealt with superficially, while the formulation of general, generous, and naive ideas take precedent over the rigorous examination and succinct analysis of conflict events. The reform of the Charter of the OAU is more urgent than ever.

While sanctifying the sluggishness of the "founding fathers," hardly numerous today, Monrovia at the same time confirmed a trend: the rise of the "young Turks" propelled to the foreground, often thanks to military coups d'etat, and to whom the law of numbers gives the advantage for the moment. It is they who today are making heard loud and clear their voices which sometimes lack experience.

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Legitimacy

When one remarks to them that arms do not confer legitimacy to their power, they retort that in their present form elections organized here and there would not of themselves constitute a criterion of democracy.

At Freetown in Sierra Leone, a year from now, this debate which was opened in Monrovia, where the question of the legitimacy of the powers is again in place, risks assuming proportions capable of shaking the foundations of the Organization of African Unity still more.

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INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS

REPORTED REACTIONARY PLAN FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 6-19 Aug 79 p 19

[Article by Augusta Conchiglia: "Will the Armed Conflict Become Generalized?"]

[Excerpts] Situated between independent Africa and the Africa of colonial regimes of oppression ("At liberty's frontier," says President Samora Machel), Mozambique plays a crucial role in the present history of Africa. Because of its active assistance to African liberation movements and because of its domestic policies, Mozambique has already paid a heavy tribute in human lives and destroyed material goods.

Indeed, since 1977 thousands of Patriotic Front fighters and civilians living in refugee camps have been killed, not only in the border areas, but in the very heartlands of the country as well.

Since 1978, commandos are being trained on Rhodesian territory so as to amplify the action of Salisbury's regular army. Constituted by Mozambican counter-revolutionaries and mercenaries, these groups call themselves "Liberation Front" or "Resistance Front"; they actually include Portuguese fascists who lost veritable agricultural and industrial empires through independence. These groups infiltrate the country, recruit high-priced traitors who facilitate their reconnaissance operation and constitute a genuine fifth column. They attack, preferably, those foreign cooperants living in isolated areas (in order to discourage them) and vital centers of the national economy.

It is a campaign designed to dissuade the FRELIMO from giving assistance to Zimbabwean fighters and aimed at ravaging the Mozambican economy so as to create an untenable situation in the country.

Actually, Pretoria reportedly has even vaster ambitions. An old South African project, momentarily set aside, is being brought back. It would create a security zone and a vitally important economic area which would extend over the entire African region located south of the Cunene and Zambezi Rivers. An ultra-reactionary "constellation of states" tied to South Africa through a "security and cooperation pact" would be set up in this area. South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha has announced it publicly and he even declared

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that, quite probably, Rhodesia, Namibia, Swaziland, Transkei and Botswana would adhere to this pact before the end of 1979.

By openly maneuvering for the recognition of the Rhodesian and Namibian puppet governments, London and Washington have practically given the green light to Pretoria for the implementation of this project. Pik Botha had also declared: "There are 40 million people living south of the Zambezi and Cunene Rivers. There are many states in the area, and others will be established which will find it easy to join the common pact."

Moreover, while fully implementing its "bantustanization" program, South Africa would gradually transform itself into an entirely white state.

Under the pretext of defending its economic interests and of protecting human lives (those of the settlers, of course), this newly white South Africa would appeal for direct assistance from the imperialist powers which are already contemplating the creation of a Euro-American fleet in the Indian Ocean, based in the island of Diego Garcia.

It is possible that these predictions are a bit too pessimistic, and many observers doubt that South Africa would ever be able to realize its ambitious plan. However, how many of these observers had actually predicted, in 1975, that the combined forces of South Africa and Zaire would invade three fourths of the Angolan territory?

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INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS

IMBALANCE OF SOVIET TRADE WITH AFRICA REPORTED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 8 Aug 79 p 25

[Article by Francisco Vergara]

[Text] Although the first commercial operations of the Soviet Union in Africa were consummated with Egypt in 1923, the real development of this trade dates from the independence period. In the 1960's, three countries quickly acquired a dominant position. Nasir's Egypt, Sekou Toure's Guinea and Nkrumah's Ghana had a total of 86 percent of the Soviet Union's African trade in 1965. Since then, Moscow's partners on the continent have greatly diversified. The share of these three countries today is only 44 percent of the total.

Although Egypt since 1974 has continued to be the No 1 supplier of the Soviet Union, Ghana, after a long eclipse, has once again risen to the No 2 position, with Libya in third place and the Ivory Coast fourth. Ghana, Libya and the Ivory Coast had a total of 39 percent of the African exports to the Soviet Union in 1978 (compared to 6.5 percent in 1974); and their trade with this country by far reflects a positive balance [excedentaire].

Among Moscow's customers, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Libya and Angola have risen to the top positions. Sales to these four countries represented 38 percent of Soviet exports to Africa in 1978, compared to 8 percent in 1974.

Although Soviet exports are quite varied (arms, trucks, tractors, machinery, condensed milk), the same cannot be said of African exports. Wine represents 93 percent of Algeria's sales; coffee 100 percent of Angola's; cacao 96 percent of Gahan's, minerals 88 percent of Ghana's, oranges 82 percent of Morocco's, sisal and coffee 100 percent of Tanzania's exports.

Africa's share of Soviet foreign trade has decreased during the last few years, dropping from 4.5 percent in 1970 to 2.8 percent in 1975 and to 2 percent in 1978. Trade declined between 1974 and 1978 which is largely explained by the decrease in Soviet-Egyptian trade: 25 percent of the Soviet total in Africa in 1978 compared to 55 percent in 1974. Although Egyptian exports to the Soviet Union have continued to decrease, they exceed imports by far--Cairo is using the positive trade balance to pay off the enormous

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debt contracted with Moscow. Trade with Algeria has decreased 20 percent compared to 1974. Algerian exports to the Soviet Union, after declining in 1976 and 1977, went back up again in 1978, a trend which continued during the first quarter of 1979.

The promising trade perspectives with Morocco (fifth largest African partner of the Soviet Union) have not yet materialized. Exports to Morocco are decreasing very slightly, while its imports (81 percent of which is oil), after having stagnated from 1976 to 1978, decreased by one half in the first quarter of 1979. Saudi Arabia offered more favorable payment terms to Morocco.

Among the revolutionary countries, Guinea-Bissau has an even trade balance with the Soviet Union. Mozambique, after a condition of balance in 1976 and 1977, closed out 1978 with a slight deficit (4 percent). Ethiopia's deficit has continued to grow since 1976: exports (a little coffee and sesame) cover only 7 percent of imports. On the other hand, Angola's trade with the Soviet Union, which had attained its peak in 1977, decreased 18 percent in 1978 and again in the first quarter of 1979. The Angolan trade deficit, on the decrease compared to 1977, is on the order of \$61 million; however, Luanda has oil revenues which should total \$1 billion in 1979. Because of this, Angola has a positive trade balance in foreign exchange which could permit it to maintain its independence vis-a-vis the Soviets.

The Luanda leaders, moreover, have refused to join the CEMA and have begun talks with the European Community, with a view to associating itself with the Lome agreement.

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ANGOLA

BRIEFS

CEMENT EXPORTS--The Republic of Angola can now export part of its cement production. The Empresa Nacional do Cimento of Lobito, in the southern part of the country, has indeed exported 9,000 tons of cement to Nigeria during this year. The company produced this year more than 100,000 tons of cement, and new installations will soon make it possible to increase production to 400,000 tons a year. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2234]

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CAPE VERDE

BRIEFS

CIVIL SERVANTS SALARIES UP--The Cape Verde government has decided to increase civil servants' salaries and pensions by 10 percent following the increase in the cost of living and in gas prices. Fuel prices (gasoline, gasoil and gas) recently registered a 50 to 60 percent increase in the wake of higher crude oil prices demanded by the oil-producing countries, a measure which automatically entailed an increase in prices of goods and services, some observers noted. Thus, air transport tariffs increased by 20 percent and land transport tariffs registered a 30 percent increase. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2217]

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CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE

BRIEFS

PATASSE RAISES MILITARY UNIT-- Ange Patasse, president of the Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People, has raised a large military unit ready for the insurrection in Bangui. [Text] [Paris] PARIS MATCH in French 17 Aug 79 p 37

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EQUATORIAL GUINEA

LITTLE KNOWN ABOUT INTENTIONS OF TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 pp 2198-2199

[Text] On 5 August, Radio Malabo announced the overthrow of the government of President Francisco Macias Nguema Biyogo.

According to this source, the coup d'etat took place on 3 August. The new strongman of Equatorial Guinea is Lt Col Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbazogo, age 33, vice minister of defense and a relative of the deposed president. A revolutionary council is reported to have been installed. According to the Libreville newspaper, L'UNION, fighting was still taking place on 7 August in the vicinity of Nzang-Ayang, the fortified town of President Macias, in the extreme eastern part of Rio Muni. The deposed chief of state has, in fact, refused to relinquish his office.

The overthrown chief of state was one of the worst tyrants in all Africa. Having come to power in 1968, he named himself president for life in 1971 and transformed the country into a kind of concentration camp in which communications with the outside world were as strictly controlled as possible.

According to the opposition, the population of Equatorial Africa (400,000 inhabitants) decreased 60 percent because of mass executions or flights abroad. Obligatory labor was instituted by the dictator who banned the Catholic Church, while indulging in nameless cruelties. We have had occasion to mention these excesses, which were denounced by organizations such as Amnesty International. The regime was such that the international community, with rare exceptions, avoided too marked relations with the master of Malabo. Spain itself, which had granted independence to Equatorial Guinea in 1968, 11 years later, had only a titular ambassador and three contract employees in its Malabo embassy.

According to the embassy, a quite natural euphoria reigned in the capital after the coup d'etat. The same was true of Libreville where a large community of Equatorial Guineans had taken refuge. Col Nguema Mbazogo ordered the release of 5,000 of the country's political prisoners. He reestablished freedom of worship as well as the right to fish in the sea (which had been reserved to the Soviets by his predecessor). The opposition installed in Madrid, through its spokesman, Leandro Mbomio, "greeted the

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overthrow of Francisco Macias and wished that a new government would make the country's structures more flexible and permit the entry into Equatorial Guinea of political factions maintained in exile by Equatorial Guineans in exile and reconcile its inhabitants."

The situation still has not reached that point, and very little is yet known about the intentions or the person of the new chief of state. A former student of the Bata lycee and the Zaragoza Military Academy, he belongs to the Fang ethnic group, which is in the majority in the continental part of the country (formerly Rio Muni) and which alone makes up 80 percent of the population. This fact by itself is not very significant. The Europeanized group of the Fernandinos on the island of Macias Nguema (formerly Fernando Poo) has long since lost all political influence and the Bubi of the island, the Benga of Corisco or the Kombe of Rio Muni are insignificant compared to the Fang, themselves subdivided into the Ntumu and Okak, whose family and ethnic ties extend to the southern part of Cameroon and the northern part of Gabon, to form the largest group, called "Pahouin," which represents more than 1 million persons.

The dynamism and individual talents of the latter make them a group of people who must be taken into account, in the three countries which accommodate them, all ethnic considerations set aside. Although the author of the coup d'etat is a relative of President Macias, that does not necessarily mean a palace revolution alone is involved. Colonel Nguema may have acted for personal reasons. He nonetheless satisfied the desire of the majority of the Equatorial Guineans.

Spain, which at one point contemplated sending an expeditionary force to Equatorial Guinea, in view of the dangers facing its nationals (8,000 have left the country since 1969), took steps to "protect its interests in the country," after the coup d'etat was announced. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Madrid has sent a diplomatic mission to Douala, Cameroon. It is headed by the director of African affairs, Lopez Aguirre Bengoa, who received the order to proceed to Malabo as soon as circumstances permit to "reestablish full diplomatic relations and offer total assistance in the reconstruction of the country, thus responding to the appeal made by the president of the Supreme Military Council, Lt Col Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbazogo, in his message addressed to the UN, the Organization of African Unity and the diplomatic corps accredited to the capital of his country."

As a matter of fact, reconstruction is mandatory: "The villages are abandoned, misery has set in, arbitrary arrests were common and assassinations for imagined plots claimed 50 to 60 victims a day," Radio Malabo acknowledged.

With a limited territory (28,000 sq km), the revenues of Equatorial Guinea, whose resources are basically agricultural (cacao, wood, coffee, bananas), before independence had been among the highest in Africa (\$135 per capita revenues from exports in 1960). However, the production of cacao which was 35,000 tons at its highest level has decreased considerably during the last few years to less than 5,000 tons.

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The repatriation in 1976 of the some 30,000 Nigerian workers from the island of Macias Nguema (where 90 percent of the country's cacao plantations are located) completely disrupted agricultural production; and the forced labor adopted by the Malabo government to offset their departure only succeeded in accentuating the exodus of villagers over the Rio Muni borders, which may be easily crossed by the Fang, while the unfortunate islanders of Pagalu (formerly Annobon) were deported en masse to Macias Nguema.

After the departure of most of the Spanish, and in the face of the disorganization of the infrastructures, President Macias Nguema appealed to the French companies which had modernized the port of Bata, constructed a presidential palace in this city and put together the Malabo administrative structures. French interventions also took place in agriculture and forest exploitation. In spite of the administrative problems of the Equatorial Guinean Government, France said that it was satisfied with contacts which it considered to be above political commitments. On the eve of the coup d'etat, France was the only Western nation having an ambassador in Malabo. However, French companies having activities in Equatorial Guinea could, as in Uganda, see themselves reproached in the future for collaboration with the discredited government.

The long patience of French diplomacy vis-a-vis the government may be surprising. Wishing to guard against "rumors" and protect its nationals by silence, Paris has done nothing other than follow the example of Madrid, where until 1976 Equatorial Guinea was a reserved matter. Moreover, the allegiances of President Macias Nguema's government to the Soviet bloc, it was thought, could have caused Moscow to interpret the hostility of France as a not too desirable alinement with U.S. positions or close to them.

So many good reasons, in which the economy had its part, could not, however, make one forget that since 1976 every French citizen visiting Equatorial Guinea was asked to present his letters to family and friends unsealed. Of course, the Equatorial Guineans did not have access to foreign newspapers. But the law of silence was definitely not strong enough to maintain on his presidential seat "the only authentic miracle of Equatorial Guinea," as Francisco Macias Nguema described himself.

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GABON

BRIEFS

MAYUMBA OIL DEPOSITS--The GMB [expansion unknown] off-shore drilling by Elf Gabon last January at Iguela-Mayumba to a depth of 25 meters 60 kms southeast of Mayumba had shown an accumulation of oil. Following a series of studies, Elf Gabon has decided to initiate a first phase in the development of these deposits. Production should begin at a modest pace at the beginning of the second quarter of 1980. By that time, operations will have made it possible to express an opinion on the possibility and the eventual modalities for the development of the entire area, whose geological characteristics and productivity per well will be specified through the first phase. Simultaneously, Elf Gabon will continue working on the two neighboring GMA [expansion unknown] and GMF [expansion unknown] accumulations in order to express a definite opinion before the end of 1980 on the interest presented by these structures and their eventual exploitation. [Excerpt] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2226]

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GUINEA

BRIEFS

PRC DELEGATION--A PRC trade union delegation visited the Republic of Guinea from 18 to 23 July. During their stay, the PRC trade unionists, who were accompanied by Mamadou Douty Oulare, press and documentation secretary of the national workers committee of Guinea, visited the Sangaredi mine and the Kamsar workers town. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2217]

NATIONAL POPULATION COMMISSION--A national population commission was established by decree No 271/PRG of 12 July 1979. This commission will define a national population policy which will take into account the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of Guinea and which would be part of the all-encompassing economic and social development plan. It will also define economic and social measures and programs which will bear upon demographic evolution. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2217]

REPORTED PROGRESSIVE CREDENTIALS LOSS--In the view of his reputedly progressive peers, Sekou Toure has definitely lost his credentials. This was the verdict issued by the last five progressive African countries: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Madagascar, Seychelles, at the time of the mini-summit which took place in Cotonou (Benin) after the OAU meeting in Monrovia (Liberia), to which the Guinean president had not been invited. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 971, 15 Aug 79 p 29]

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GUINEA-BISSAU

BRIEFS

ELECTRICITY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT--Guinea-Bissau will invest 1.35 billion pesos, the equivalent of its present budget, for the development of a modern electricity network within the next 7 years. The National Energy Institute has prepared a program which has been adopted by the government. The program will boost power to 20,000 kilowatts thanks to an increase of the power produced by the Bissau and Bafata plants, to the installation of high-voltage lines and the utilization of the hydro-electric potential of the Corubal River in the southeastern part of the country. According to the president of the institute, this program will satisfy the needs of the population in the cities and large centers, as well as those of the existing industries in addition to those which will be installed during the next 20 years. Several countries and international organisms have been contacted for participation in the program's financing. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 10 Aug 79 p 2217]

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RHODESIA

BRIEFS

MERCENARIES IN FORCES--According to Cuban sources, 15,000 mercenaries serve in the Rhodesian armed forces, as opposed to 10,000 in 1978. The main contingents are reportedly South Africans (4,600), Portuguese (2,800), North Americans (2,300), French (1,800), West Germans (1,050) and Israelis (800). /Text/ /Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 15-22 Aug 79 p 29/

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SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN TIES WITH TAIWAN EXAMINED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 8 Aug 79 p 27

[Article by Richard Breeze, Hong Kong correspondent]

[Text] South Africa continues to be Taiwan's chosen ally, the relations between the two countries will be developed even more. H. K. Yang, one of Taiwan's vice ministers of foreign affairs, told us that the Taiwan-South Africa committee handling economic and technical cooperation will henceforth meet at the ministerial level.

While emphasizing beforehand that Taiwan is opposed to apartheid, Yang added, "Our relations with Pretoria are most cordial, and bilateral cooperation could be intensified. I see no obstacle to closer relations."

As early as 1976, diplomatic relations between Pretoria and Taiwan had been raised to the level of embassies. What is more, a South African military attache is assigned to Taiwan.

Wilhelm Burger, the ambassador of Pretoria to Taipei, is formal: "The decision to discuss cooperation at a higher level reflects the quality of our relations."

In the trade exchanges sector, South Africa is already Taiwan's best customer in Africa. In 1978, these exchanges experienced an increase of 60 percent.

Moreover, informed Taiwanese sources let it be understood that South Africa might sell to Taipei sophisticated weapons, recently perfected by Pretoria military experts, of the assault rifle and field gun type. In exchange, South Africa could be interested in the "Hsieng Feng," a short range, ground-to-ground missile, manufactured in Taiwan.

To the reproach of establishing privileged relations with the apartheid country, Yang replies dryly: "If anyone criticizes us, I will tell him to go to hell and mind his own business." As a matter of fact, Taiwan does not have a great deal to lose: its diplomatic allies now number no more than 21, most of which are Central and South American states. In Black Africa, apart from South African satellite states--Lesotho and Swaziland--only the Ivory Coast and Malawi have maintained their relations with Nationalist China.

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However, Yang is very discreet when it comes to discussing relations with Abidjan. They are not now too friendly. For example, no official visit is anticipated in the relatively near future. Yang, nicknamed here "Mr Africa," then showed us photos in which he is seen at the side of former African personalities, such as former Presidents Olympio and Tsiranana, from Togo and Madagascar, respectively. Displayed on his desk is a book bearing a dedication from Tom Mboya. The phantoms of yesterday's Africa are still haunting him. With nostalgia, he talks about the 1960's, of the time, before they turned to Peking, when more than 20 African countries had the best of relations with Taipei and had around 3,000 Nationalist technical assistants within their borders. That was the Golden Age.

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